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A STUDY OF JOB AND THE JEWISH THEORY OF SUFFERING.

THE book of Job is the master-work of Hebrew Poetry. It is the natural product of the Hebrew spirit and theology and the Hebrew conception of nature. It is the culmination, at the point in history where it is found, of the genial aptitudes of the Hebrew religious spirit plus the particularism of Semitism,—of these two confronted by the observed and observable facts of experience. It has a history of development which robs it of all uniqueness as a thought-product. It is begotten, not made,—begotten in a land and in the midst of a people who were intensely religious, devoid of any profound knowledge of the operation of natural law,—among whom, indeed, the concept of natural law was excluded by the belief, which was more than a working theory, in a constant and immediate divine intervention,—begotten in the heart of a people who were plumb at every point to the most august spirit of independence.

The mediæval and modern Jew who cringes to power and fawns for friendship is a development, not a creation,—the product of the Ghetto, not the free-born of Judæa. The ancient Hebrew, like the ancient Semite, everywhere challenged regard. In the hour of conscious right he flung defiance in the face of despots and hurled his anathemas and his spear against the overwhelming might of imperial Babylon and Rome.

The spirit of the Jew is in Job,—Job, who all his life feared his God and now defies him. The voice of conscious integrity within could not be silenced. We are here with a spirit remarkable for an age when knowledge was in its twilight, and that broader conception of *a universe*, with all its implications, was unthought,—that conception which has robbed human souls of the terrors of the Unseen by enshrining deity within them.

Job in his defiant moods is an ancient Laertes as he is described in George Eliot's *College Breakfast Party*. "What to me are any dictates, though they came with thunder from the Mount, if still within I see a higher Right, a higher Good compelling love and worship? Though the earth held force electric to discern and kill each thinking rebel,—what is martyrdom but death defying utterance of belief, which being mine remains my truth supreme, though solitary as the throb of pain lying outside the pulses of the world? Obedience is good: ay, but to what? And for what ends? For say that I rebel against your rule as devilish, or as rule of thunder-guiding powers that deny man's benefit: rebellion then were strict obedience to another rule *which bids me flout your thunder.*" The same voice that speaks here speaks in Job. In Laertes it is intellectual and Faustian, in Job it is religious. In both it is the ethical imperative that asserts itself. It is the compulsion of an inner law of Right,—the behest of a commanding truth uttering itself with unmistakable and imperial authority from the very throne of the soul itself. Such an authority upon such a throne is regnant over all moral action. To disobey it, whatever other voices may demand audience, whether coming from earthly or heavenly conclaves, were to bring swift damnation by dealing a paralysing blow at the ethical consciousness. Job and Laertes do not differ in their ethical attitudes. Job insists upon personal integrity, and he cannot deny his own inward sense of right. To do so would be to unsheathe the sword of his own scabbard with suicidal result. If Jahwe (Jehovah), his God, is to be justified by his admission of guilt, by self-condemnation despite the inward sense of perfect rectitude, then the voice within must rise imperious in the maintenance of its personal rights and

Jahwe must needs justify Himself in the presence of this ethical imperator. Job felt what Schiller later wrote :

"For, by the laws of spirit, in the right
Is every individual character
That acts in strict accordance with itself;
Self-contradiction is the only wrong."

The self-reliant, independent spirit of the old Hebrews, natural to them as a part of their Semitism, fostered by the vicissitudes of their history, and by their religious belief in the national protection of Jahwe, is one of the elements which may not be ignored in any serious effort to discover the causes of this literary work. We do not affirm a spirit of independence and consciousness of moral right unique among the Hebrews. It is, however, especially strong among them. The prophets are its first and great exponents; John the Baptist, and Jesus, and Paul died in maintaining their spiritual freedom. These were Ajaxes defying the lightning. Prometheus who believes that Zeus has withheld his gifts from his people shows it in his theft of heavenly fire for human benefit. Foreknowing well his doom, he opposes the will of Zeus in obedience to the higher law of benevolence within. We have it in Socrates; and Faust, standing on the vantage-ground of new ideas of physical law, cuts clean athwart the doctrines current in his age. Self-assertive independence which faces the frowns of traditionalism, maintaining the right to determine for itself its own actions and beliefs, is the potent force in all the revolutionising and progressive works of literature. It varies in degree, but exists among all peoples. In proportion as it possesses a people, it makes of them ministers to the progress of civilisation and knowledge. It is precisely to those peoples among whom it has been most potent—the Hebrew, Greeks, and Anglo-Saxons—that we find we are most indebted when we come to take account of our intellectual and spiritual stock.

Another element entering into the causes which operated, or rather conditioned, the production of the Book of Job was the Semitic dogma of the relation between sin and suffering,—between individual righteousness and individual prosperity, national infidel-

ity and national failure. Between God and man there was no intermediary. The doctrine of Secondary Causes, brought in by the Greeks, was unknown. There was no law which worked out its unerring results and which God Himself might not transgress without inducing a cosmical and moral cataclysm. They did not know the law of gravitation could not be suspended without destroying the universe, because they did not know the law. God was to them a despot,—a good despot on the whole, especially to the Jews whom He had chosen as His favorites. His will was fugitive, whimsical, irrational. As God's people, if they suffered, God sent the suffering because they had sinned. All the good and goods of life were, in a strict sense, of His immediate bestowal. All the calamities and woes of life were punishments sent for disobedience or transgression. Listen to the inquirer of Jesus, "Who *did sin*, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?" Virtue *was* not its own reward, but *brought* its reward as an external thing, conveyed from without, not reached from within by bringing the soul into harmony with its own ideal.

The experiences of men were forcing into the foreground of thought other ideas. Long before the Book of Job was written there probably had been current in popular tradition the story of "the good and upright man" "who feared God and eschewed evil," and yet in the end had gone down in the overwhelming loss of family and property and fell himself the victim of a foul disease. History had taught them the same lesson.

The most pious king that had ever sat upon the throne, Josiah the son of Amon, had been abandoned in the day of his trouble. More than any other king he had shown himself zealous for the pure worship of Jahwe and used his utmost energies to abolish idolatries and superstitions. He decreed the destruction of the "higher places," the removal of images, abolished foreign cults and local sanctuaries and altars, and centralised worship in Jerusalem in entire obedience to the law book of the temple. And where was the reward? What was the end? He fell unprotected in the hour of his need in that fatal battle with Pharaoh-Necho in the plain of Esdraelon. Where was Jahwe then, and why did He not come to

his rescue if this Jewish theory of the miseries, sufferings, and ills of life gave an adequate explanation of Jahwe's relation to the world? Clearly, it was insufficient.

And we are not left here to conjecture the effects of these experiences and observations upon the Jewish people. We know distinctly from the prophets that there were some who denied this doctrine *in toto* and pointed to the well-known facts of history to justify their infidelity. Ezechiel heard the complaint oft repeated by pious lips, "The way of Jahwe is not right!" And the Jews who were in Egypt with Jeremiah (see Cap. 44) replied to his persuasions and threatenings. "As for the word which thou hast spoken unto us in the name of Jahwe we will not hearken unto thee, but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth, to burn incense unto the queen of heaven and to pour forth drink-offerings unto her as we have done, we and our fathers our kings and our princes, in the cities of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem; *for then* had we plenty of victuals and were well and saw no evil, but since we left off to burn incense to the queen of heaven and to pour out drink-offerings unto her, we have wanted all things and have been consumed by the sword and by famine. And when we burnt incense to the queen of heaven and poured out drink-offerings unto her, did we make her cakes to worship her and pour out drink-offerings to her without our men?" The worship of Jahwe they claimed was no better for them than the worship of the foreign goddess. While they worshipped the latter they were prosperous and happy, and their fellows and husbands instead of being slain in battle lived secure with them in peaceful homes and joined with them in their sacrifices. These observable and simple facts of experience and plain records of history must have been as patent to the profound believer in Jahwe as to these sceptical idolaters. The question must have presented itself to thoughtful minds: "Were the times and the nation so utterly corrupt and bad when Jerusalem was destroyed?" History said "No!" Though not free from idolatry the times were never better, and yet the storm of Babylon broke upon them and crash upon crash the walls of Jerusalem fell in heaps and Judah was desolated.

To overcome this conviction wide-spread among the people, Ezechiel found it necessary to construct a theodicy ; Jahwe's ways had to be vindicated. A rapid survey of Israel's history is made and the conclusion reached that it is written in wrongs from first to last. Sodom even when compared with Jerusalem was less abandoned, and Samaria and the heathen were far more preferable.

Still doubt of the old dogma had found a place in the ethical consciousness and once lodged there it could not be uprooted. Men had come to that stage of experience and reflexion where, while they acknowledged that sin was the direct cause of much evil, it was, nevertheless, not admitted to be the cause of all individual and national suffering and misfortune. This, then, is another of the historical facts in the development of the people which must be borne in mind in accounting for the appearance of this sceptical work in Hebrew literature as well as in every attempt to interpret it.

A third element which enters into the book and which gives to it one of its great charms is its descriptions of nature. They cannot be surpassed in literary charm. They have been given once and they can never be given again, because we have emerged completely out of the old mythical ideas of nature which underlie them. With our advance in science and our spirit of philosophical analysis, our conceptions of an orderly and ordered universe, nature has taken on for us new mysteries but she has lost her pale prodigies and old marvels. The spirits of the air are lost in a vanished night, the waters beneath are robbed of their leviathans and *Ungeheuer*. Cloud-mists scaling the mountain side no longer rise as furious giants to scale the battlements of heaven and storm the gods in their Olympian citadel. The heavenly constellations, still "Great" and "Little Bears," once mighty potentates and fierce monsters warring against the God of heaven, but conquered and bound in chains in their respective places, are now star worlds not unlike our own. Orion needs no chains. The dragon Rahab and the serpent are no longer, "as in the ancient days and in the generations of old," "cut to pieces," like the *ribu Tidmat* of Babylonian myth, to build or decorate the firmament. These and all the rest of the old mythologies which still held sway over oriental minds

when this book was written have been so far left behind us that few readers of the Old Testament know even what are referred to. The sky is "unpropred," as the Indian sage sang. Its Babylonian and Jewish "pillars" have fallen. As the great spirits have become a vanished race, so the stars no longer "clap their hands for joy," and the sun has ceased to create visions of a "strong man rejoicing to run a race." What a world! What a time to live in! Up in heaven Jahwe held his counsels—a kind of Olympian conclave—angels met with him and *Satan* appeared in the assembly. Jahwe had swift winds and lightnings for his messengers, and special ambassadors were sent on supreme errands. The memories were still vivid of olden days when the Titan monsters rose rebellious against God. Eliphaz knows of them, and Job in his defiant mood recalls them to him :

"Wilt thou keep to the ancient path
Which the wicked men have trod?
Who were speedily cut down,
Whose foundations were poured out as a flood;
Who kept saying to 'El (God): 'Depart from us!'
And: What can *Shaddai* do unto them?
And yet had He filled their houses with good things."

Job knows them, too. In 16, 14 he complains that Jahwe has treated him like one of them. "He breaketh me with breach upon breach."

In an age when the ocean-deeps could be looked upon as a female monster, and falling stars were discordant angels hurled from heaven, the imagination was quite capable of peopling the earth with a race of demons. All such ideas endure long after a people have arrived at a stage of development wholly inconsistent with them,—endure though doubted, and even consciously rejected, yet unconsciously propagating the memory of themselves in the literary forms and figures of thought which always finds itself more or less dominated by the "old ways." We are not surprised, then, to find these and other kindred ideas wrought into this poetic work. It is precisely this simplicity of the age which made all nature a

living thing, capable of seeing, feeling, and "groaning together," which lends to the book so much of its poetic charm.

WHO WAS JOB?

The book of Job is not the history of a person. It is the record of an idea. It presents a phase of scepticism such as is invariably engendered by an imperfect, too devout, and unreasoned faith. Job in Hebrew means simply "the attacked." Whether such a person as Job lived or not, we have no means of determining, but that a tradition, or tale, of a righteous man who met with great misfortune, had lived, we are perhaps compelled to assume. Such a tradition, which may have been wrought into the form of a prose narrative at an early period, may have been taken up by the poet. In the simple and slender story of "the good man in the land of Uz" the poet saw the way prepared for a completer tale in whose telling he could engage all the attractions of Hebrew verse and into which he might pour all the ferment of ideas that were stirring within his own soul. The earlier story may have served our poet just as the *Volksbuch* served Goethe for the framework of his *Faust* and just as the latter unconsciously in other parts and consciously in the *Prolog im Himmel* drew from the Book of Job. We have nothing left of this popular tale if it ever was reduced to literary form except the prologue and short epilogue. The remainder of it was dropped, and the poet added his own creations to the narrative part.

The history of the imaginary events are confined to extra-Israelitish territory, and consequently the name of the national God Jahwe is carefully omitted. It occurs only in portions conceded by many to be corrupt. The other divine names, *El*, *Eloah*, *Elohim*, *Shaddai*, are chosen. For the same reason, viz., the non-Israelitish setting of the work, no reference is found to Israelitish law and ritual.

THE AGE OF THE BOOK AND ITS PURPOSE.

It is probably not earlier than the exile. There are still those in our midst who speak of it as "one of the oldest works of litera-

ture,—a statement which proves more in respect to the tenacity of old views than to the age of our poem.

With reference to its object much has been said, and scholars are not yet agreed. Cheyne says, “I would entitle it, ‘The Book of the trial of the righteous man and of the justification of God.’” Dr. Davidson of Edinburgh in speaking of the idea and purpose of the book writes: “The book of Job, as we possess it, conveys the impression that it is a finished and well-rounded composition. Its form—Prologue, Poem, and Epilogue—suggests that the writer had a clear idea before his mind, which he started, developed, and brought to an issue, in a way satisfactory to himself. . . . the author being assumed, however, to have a distinct idea, this idea still remains so obscure, and the question: ‘What is the purpose of the book?’ has been answered in so many ways, that a judgment regarding it must be put forth with the greatest diffidence.”

We must assume that the suffering hero gives expression, in his rebuttal of the quasi-arguments advanced by his opponents, to the poet's own views. The antagonists are all agreed in their doctrine that sin and suffering are invariably connected as unholy cause and effect. Suffering cannot reign where there has not been previous sin, conscious or unconscious. If Job has not been guilty of wilful and open sin, then there must have been unconscious and secret sin. The purpose of the book of Job, so far as its main contention goes, is to show that this teaching in the Jewish doctrine of hamartiology is wholly inadequate to the explanation of the facts of human experience. Job presents himself as a case of suffering, and so conscious is he of his purity that not even God himself could wrest from him a confession of guilt; and God ultimately commends him. Besides his own case there are instances sufficiently numerous, Job points out, of notoriously wicked men whose lives are hedged about with prosperity and the end thereof crowned with peace.

This doctrine of sin was as prominent among the Hebrews as the contemporary doctrine of Jahwe's special guidance which issued in the Jewish ideas of the theocracy. The prophets who were far beyond their contemporaries, both within and without Judah and

Israel, in their theology never rose above it; but Jesus refuted it: "Neither did this man sin nor his parents, but that the works of God should be made manifest in him." All the woes of the nation were ascribed by every prophet in turn to Jahwe's anger because he was forsaken. The purpose of the book will be made clearer when we have made a survey of its contents. If, however, what has already been said as to the main historical cause be supported, this will not exclude the *possibility* that the work has a secondary purpose, based upon the establishment of the untenableness of the old dogma, of consoling the nation as a whole in the multifarious calamities which befell them. There still remains the divine moral purpose in suffering,—the testing and edification of the righteous by adversity, but this is nowhere clearly predicated. Besides these ideas, and incidental to the discussion, the limitations of human knowledge are enforced.

THE LITERARY FORM OF THE BOOK.

Is the Book of Job an epic or a drama, or is it more distinctly a didactic poem? I prefer to place it in the category of didactic poems. Many writers, however, are pleased to regard it as a drama, and it certainly is not lacking in dramatic elements. It has its *dramatis personæ*, we may say, plot, and denouement, but the *finale* is not the necessary consequence of the preceding action. The question of evil is not definitely answered; at best Job is acquitted of the charge and justified in his antagonism to and refutation of the old dogma. That evil may find its explanation in a sphere above and beyond human ken is intimated in the book, but the explanation is *not* given but postponed. Omitting the minor forms of the drama, melodrama, lyric, etc., and rejecting the second great division, the comic, there remains only the tragic with which the work has certain distinct affinities. The mental or spiritual situations are intensely tragic, but the happy issue is not in harmony with a tragic play. When compared with Prometheus with which in many respects it has generic affinities, it, nevertheless, fails to show the same distinctively and decisively dramatic elements. In the Greek play the situation is beyond dispute. There

is a definite act—fire is stolen from heaven for human benefit, contrary to the will of Zeus. Prometheus foresees the consequences and accepts his doom. In Job all is uncertain—*the act* is dogmatically inferred by his opponents from supposed results, and a plot against the unwitting victim is secretly made in the heavenly conclave. Prometheus acts consciously and defiantly and knows the cause of his suffering. In so far as they show the same vehemence of invective against their respective gods, Prometheus and Job are alike—they are different in that the former is enlisted in the interest of humanity, the latter in the defence of his integrity.

ANALYSIS OF THE BOOK.

The book consists of five parts :

(1) The prologue written in prose, Caps. 1-2 ; (2) the colloquies or dialogues between Job and his three friends, Caps. 3-31 ; (3) the discourse of Elihu, Caps. 32-37 ; (4) Jehovah's answer to Job, Caps. 38-47 : 6 ; (5) epilogue in prose, 47: 7-17.

In the prologue Job is represented as a great Arabian Sheik dwelling in the land of Uz. He is a worshipper of Jehovah, who in the heavenly council declares that "there is none like Job on the earth." On account of his virtue he has been the recipient of the greatest of earthly blessings. He is a great Eastern Emeer, with a large family and possessions. Job is scrupulously pious. After the great family festivities, moved by fear that in the midst of their rejoicings they may have committed some inadvertence or sin, he was wont to sanctify them and present burnt offerings. We are introduced into the heavenly conclave in verse 6. The sons of *Elohim* enter the assembly. They are supernatural beings of a lower rank than *Elohim*, and were probably primitive rebellious Titan spirits who were ultimately made subject.

The phrase "sons of God" (*bene Elohim*) is not descriptive of their office, but of their nature. In their midst appears the Satan, or accuser, who is in the service of *Elohim* as a moral censor of the human race. He has just completed one of his customary rounds of inspection of the world and returned on high. Presumably he has been telling in the heavenly conclave what a bad place

it is, and Jahwe directs his attention to Job: "Hast thou considered carefully my servant Job, for there is not his like in the earth, a man perfect and upright, who feareth *Elohim* and turneth away from evil?" Satan, bent on mischief, asks whether Job's virtue is not mere selfish interest. "Is it for nought that Job fears Elohim?" Jahwe delivers Job to Satan to test him and permits him full exercise of his malevolent power. One after another Job's flocks are destroyed, then his servants, finally he is bereft of his children. His wife who is to play the rôle of a tempter is, "with grim humor," spared to him. With calmness and resignation Job weighed his sorrow and said, though despoiled of all, he was as well off as when he entered the world naked at his birth. When the Satan enters the assembly a second time Job is extolled as superior to his worst assaults; and Satan replies that his failure was due to Job's unmeasured selfishness. He was willing to sacrifice everything if his own life were untouched: "all that a man hath will he give for his life." Put forth thine hand and touch his bone and his flesh and he will renounce thee to thy face. Satan is then allowed to afflict him in his person as he will, on condition that his life be not wholly taken. Job is then afflicted with a loathsome form of leprosy. His wife taunts him with his integrity and calls upon him to curse God and die. Yet Job sinned not; but reproved his tempter in words of patient fidelity: "Shall we receive good at the hand of God and shall we not receive evil?" When these elements of the plot are introduced Satan disappears, and the rest of the book centres about his behavior under his dire misfortune and his steadfast maintenance of his integrity in opposition to his accusers. He does not know that he is on trial, or that Satan's accusation is the mediate occasion of his affliction and he the direct cause. He ascribes everything to God. The position is distinctly tragic. All the powers of good and evil have consented to test to the uttermost a mortal's integrity, and he knows it not. Job, therefore, faces the problem as a modern might who has lost faith in the devil's existence. The situation is simpler, but for superficial thought less solvable.

It is here that the inner tragedy of the book begins. Spoiled of his property, bereft of his family, his body as it were moth-eaten

by a foul disease, Job, the man of exemplary piety, applauded for it in the heavenly conclave by God himself, assails in unmistakable language the current dogma of the Hebrews which taught an invariable causal connexion between suffering and sin, prosperity and integrity. Notwithstanding his overwhelming misfortune and unbearable suffering he insists upon conscious rectitude and unimpeachable character. The discussion between Job and his friends falls into three groups of speeches, (1) Caps. 4-14; (2) Caps. 15-21; (3) Caps. 22-31. We have six speeches in each of the groups except the last. Elephaz first appears in defence of Jahwe and Job replies. Bildad next presents the case in favor of Jahwe and Job replies. Zophar follows on Jahwe's side and Job replies. In the same order of debate the three friends present their arguments in each group except in the last where Zophar is left speechless. The poet suggests that the opportunity was given again to Zophar, but he failed to return to the debate. After Job finished his reply (in Cap. 26) to Bildad's last brief reiteration of his position he seems to have anticipated the return of Zophar but was disappointed. Cap. 27, therefore, goes on: "And Job again took up his parable and said." The exclusion of the third opponent at this point is a fine intimation on the part of the poet that the contention of the friends was untenable and that Job would finally triumph. The brevity of Bildad's speech in Cap. 25 points in the same direction. He had exhausted his resources in the previous effort and hence had nothing important to add beyond what must have appeared to Job as a pious platitude about God's infinite greatness, and the *non-sequitur* that the stars must appear impure in his sight, *ergo*, man, who was only a worm at best, the unclean product of the impure σάρξ or flesh of woman, could not be pure.

We have here in this idea of the impurity of the flesh the old Hebrew notion of sin—the notion that is brought out forcibly in the apostle Paul's argument in his Epistle to the Romans, that there is something in the material flesh of man that is essentially sinful. It is a view of things which even Job himself admits in Cap. 14, where he asks, "Who can bring a clean thing out of an

unclean?" And it is to this idea of the impurity of matter that we owe the philosophical introduction to the Gospel of John.

THE SPEECHES.

Let us now return to the speeches. Job, after he is smitten with disease, which is rotting away his bones and skin, is presented sitting in ashes trying to find relief from the irritation of his body by scratching it with a piece of broken pottery, as many a poor leprous afflicted sufferer does at the present day in the Orient. Near Job on the ground sit his three friends amazed and stupefied. Their silence is both sympathetic and merciful. The poet has a double reason for leaving them in dumb thoughtfulness. In the midst of great suffering even the best-meant words of comfort or consolation may pierce the soul like iron. Their silence proves their humane and genuine feeling and Job's unspeakable suffering. Silent sympathies are the strongest, just as silent suffering is the most unendurable. These are "friends" and deeply sympathising friends, and by presenting them thus at the beginning the poet brings out more strongly their stubborn faith in their narrow creed when later they show themselves merciless in accusing him of secret sin, and in heartless chidings for his folly. That is the kind of faith which made Paul hold Stephen's coat while others stoned him, and which made inquisitors out of otherwise humane spirits. Whether or not the poet intended to emphasise the dehumanising effects of a narrow faith, the effect is certainly here by implication. Had they not felt for him so keenly they would have spoken before several days passed. They were not waiting to hear his first impatient complaint that they might have definite ground for attack, for they came expressly to comfort him. They were old friends and must have been closely knit to him as the result of his well-known conduct and character.

When Job at length speaks, his misery has mastered his first spirit of resignation. In words of violent indignation and despair he curses the day of his birth and wishes that it may be blotted out of the year's calendar, and that he had died at once from the womb. He prays that the night when he was conceived may be robbed

even of its glimmering twilight, and that the deep darkness may claim as its possession the day whereon he was born. (Cap. 3: 2-12.) This first outburst of Job brings him before us not as a reasoner or inquirer, but as a despondent sceptic. His life, previously untouched by ill and hedged about by happy circumstances, had not led him into those profounder regions of thought where its great antinomies of joy and sorrow, happy hey-days and death's shadows, call for reconciliation. Now the whole weight of these antagonistic problems of existence come upon him and he is crushed. His life was as inexplicable as it was unbearable, and he found no consolatory explanation. His religion did not even hold out to him hope for an explanation in another world, and he does not try to find one. The misery of life is beyond all plaint and endurance. He is suddenly a pessimist like Schopenhauer, and the poem is at one in this pessimism with all the sceptical dramas ancient and modern.

Job in this attitude of longing for release in oblivion and death is no longer a Jew but a member of the human family. He is at one with Prometheus in his reply to the chorus of the daughters of Okeanos when they came to sympathise with him as Job's friends came to him, when looking upon Prometheus "spiked down on chains upon the rock beneath the open sky" the chorus says: "I see Prometheus and a fearful mist steals o'er my two tearful eyes seeing how thy frame doth pine upon this rock, helplessly bound in adamantine chains." Prometheus answers just as Job has answered here: "Would that in Hades beneath or Tartaros unlimited, home of the dead where darkness reigns, he'd placed me."

This is the first impulse in all the sceptical dramas where there is overwhelming suffering. Faust in his frantic despair of knowledge, failing to achieve it by study and magic, dotes on the poisonous cup until he hears on Easter morn the words of the Easter anthem:

"Christ ist erstanden,
Freude dem Sterblichen,
Den die verderblichen,
Schleichenden, erblichen
Mängel umwanden."

Hamlet too, when the pressure of his surroundings forces upon him his inequality for the task which they impose, meditates on suicide and asks whether 'tis better "to be or not to be." To appreciate Job fully in his plight we must remember that the Jew was by nature ecstatic, joyous, sentimental. He had a rapture in living unknown to us of Saxon blood and Puritan heritage. Existence without happiness found no explanation or justification. He asks despairingly in this chapter of maledictions :

"Wherefore giveth he to the suffering light,
And life to those who are bitter of soul,
Who long for death, but it comes not,
Who search for it more than for treasure,
Who would be glad unto exultation
And rejoice should they find the grave?"

He is led by his own sufferings to raise the question in the name of all suffering humanity. Verses 20-26 of this third chapter give us the problem of the book. Why is life the gift of God made miserable? By raising the question *he pronounces it unanswerable*. He knows what the friends will say. They will fall back upon the old dogma, "suffering implies sin." He puts himself in direct antagonism to their view before they speak.

FIRST SPEECH OF ELIPHAZ.

Eliphaz is the first to take up the argument in support of the Jewish theory. He attempts to conciliate Job with fair compliments after suggesting that it is with a certain delicacy of feeling for him in his trouble that he ventures to discuss the subject at all. "If one essay to speak with thee wilt thou be displeased, but who can withhold himself from speaking?" "Thou," he says, "hast instructed many, thou hast strengthened the weak hands, and upheld him that was falling. Now that it toucheth thee, wilt thou, wise counsellor, great *consolator*, faint and be troubled?"

"Is not the fear of God thy confidence,
And thy hope the integrity of thy ways?"

Experience teaches that such confidence is well founded, for

"Think now who ever perished being innocent,
Or when were the upright cut off?"

Eliphaz points out that the great law of nature that like produces like is verified in his own experience as applicable to human conduct.

"According as I have seen they that plowed iniquity
And sowed trouble reaped the same.
By the breath of God they perished,
And by his anger-blast were they consumed."

More than this, he has been visited in the night by a spirit who held secret communion with him :

"There was silence, and I heard a voice :
Can man be just before God ?
Can a man be pure before his maker ?
Behold He trusteth not in his servants,
And His angels He chargeth with folly :
How much more them that dwell in clay houses!"

Were Job to appeal against God to some of the angels for deliverance from this state of moral inability and consequent suffering, he would only aggravate the case and vex himself unto death. He is bidden again to remember that affliction does not come uncaused.

"For affliction cometh not out of the dust,
Nor doth trouble sprout forth from the ground."

The implications of Eliphaz's words are that whatever Job may think of his own innocence, innocent he cannot be. Man is a sinful creature, and no one is so perfect before God that he can claim exemption from suffering. He says in substance God's law of action is grounded in goodness. "If he makes sore, he also binds up." He urges Job to submit to the chastening, and all that he has lost will be restored and he himself delivered. Even nature shall be in league with him, and he shall come to his grave in peace and in a full age.

This speech of Eliphaz is adroitly put, but Job in his reply (in Chapter vi.) implies that the argument lacked cogency, because it did not meet the demands of the case. Eliphaz has based his rea-

soning on human imperfections in general, and such unusual sufferings as his could not be explained by referring them to the common defects of the race. He is wholly unconscious of guilt, and yet his sufferings are exceptionally severe. The speech of his friend has ignored this most essential point. By treating his unparalleled sufferings as though common troubles, arising from common causes, he has increased them. Job, therefore, impatient of his consoler, cries out :

"Would that my displeasure were thoroughly weighed,
And my destruction balanced (with it) in scales !
For now it is heavier than the sand of the sea :
Therefore my words do stammer."

Violent as his words have been, and he admits this, his displeasure has been in no sense commensurate with his wretched plight. If he has been violent, it is because his spirit has been poisoned by the poisoned arrows of the Almighty. Eliphaz has drawn his analogies from nature to prove his point ; so can he. Has he not cause for his vehemence ? Does the wild ass go about braying when he has grass to eat ? Does the ox stand bellowing over a full crib ? Job's vehemence comes from violent abuse ; consequently he does not set his hope in future good fortune, but in death. Were a future release to be hoped for, or had he strength to endure, he might repress violent words.

"What is my strength that I should hope,
And what is my end that I should prolong my life (for it) ?
Is my strength the strength of stones,
Or is my flesh bronze ? "

If God would only crush him out of existence, put forth his hand and cut him off, that were an act of mercy in which he would rejoice, for "never have I denied the words of the Holy One." This self-assertion, in the face of unbearable suffering, and its sublime self-conscious rectitude is truly Promethean. Conscious of omnipotent power which may do with him as it pleases, he refuses to yield his integrity. Like Prometheus, who knew that Zeus was unjust, Job feels that God is unjust and implies it, though he does not explicitly assert it.

Job now animadverts strongly upon the falsity of his friends, whom he sarcastically calls his brothers. He had a right to receive comfort from them, but they have cruelly disappointed his hopes as the treacherous brook-beds which entice the caravans of the desert only to leave them to perish with unslacked thirst. Let them *teach him*, and he will hold his peace. Thus far they have been no better than evil men who would gamble for the body of an orphan and sell their friends for gain. They have a theory to uphold and are ready to sacrifice his breaking heart to it, and he has discernment enough to understand them. Would they withdraw from him?—then be it so, rather than let injustice be continued in their accusations of guilt!

In Cap. VII. Job dwells upon the brevity of human life. He longs for the end of it, as the weary and sunburnt toiler longs for shadow of night. Besides his mental anguish his body is racked with pain, with ulcerous and worm-breeding sores, and his skin wastes in streams of corruption. Therefore, because life is short, he *must speak* in the anguish of his spirit and pour out all his complaint. With fierce invective he assails God. God has so little care for him that he no longer hesitates, as in Cap. III., to vent his feeling in fiercest speech.

"So then I will not restrain my speech,
I will speak in my distress of spirit,
Will utter my wail in my bitterness of soul,—
Am I a sea or a sea monster
That thou settest a guard over me?"

He feels that God is dealing with him as though he were one of that old wicked brood of demons that He subdued long ago. The *tannin* of the text does not mean "whale" (Av.) but refers to the destroying serpent of Babylonian myth. The unrestrained indignation of the sufferer in this chapter reaches in its expression the utmost limits of Titanic defiance, and the language is unsurpassed in power by any of the sceptical dramas. They are fierce utterances, as defiant as those of the Greek in his reply to the chorus when they suggest that Zeus may send him worse woes than he has, "Well, worship ye, kneel and cringe to him who rules. For me I

care for Zeus e'en less than nought, so, let him do!" They recall the equally defiant words of Faust :

"I reverence thee! For what?
Hast thou ever assuaged the pains of the suffering?
Hast thou ever stopped the tears of the sorrowing?"

Job does not say he will worship God no more; but his feeling has become for the time completely master of him. The common Jewish conception of God's gracious attributes are lost sight of, and God is daringly accused of injustice, cruelty, arbitrariness, malice, and meanest espionage. The poor victim of his omnipotent tyranny is not even allowed respite to swallow his spittle. Granting, though not admitting, that he has sinned, why, if He is a benevolent God, does He not pardon him? We must bear in mind that this outburst of scepticism is temporary, and induced by a revolt from a theology which pitilessly assaulted a good man in a state of intolerable suffering—a theology which in his inmost soul he felt was false. In rebelling against the theology he verged, as is often done in the seething times of the soul when it is called upon to modify its beliefs, too closely on rejecting God with the theology.

BILDAD'S SPEECH.

The next person in the debate and introduced in Cap. VIII. is Bildad. Unlike the adroit Eliphaz, Bildad is of coarse fibre. He has no prefatory compliment to make. On the other hand, he rudely and impatiently assails Job, likening his unchecked utterances to windy bluster.

"How long wilt thou speak such things,
And the words of thy mouth be a mighty wind?"

Bildad repeats the time-worn arguments on the subject of suffering. The source of all his sorrow is his lack of purity and uprightness (verse 6). He makes the usual accusation of the pietist against the thinker—pride in his own knowledge. Let him show becoming humility—go back to *the fathers* and learn of them what they have searched out. The modern form of Bildadism might be readily improvised somewhat as follows: "This body, by virtue of

its delegated authority, stamps with emphatic disapproval all utterances contained in the speech not in harmony with the standards."

What is this testimony of the fathers?—this, viz., that every effect has a cause, all results are consequent upon definite antecedents.

"Can the rush grow up without mire,
Or the reed-grass without water?"

Just as the rushes and the reeds wither when the hot sun and winds overtake them, so the wicked man when confronted by the search-rays of divine justice. Let him repent:

"Then will his mouth be filled with laughter
And his lips with joyful shouting."

Job in reply to Bildad's speech acknowledges all that he has said of God's might and of human inability to enter the lists with him. In a passage pregnant with power and rising to poetic sublimity he proceeds, himself, to declare God's omnipotence.

"He removeth the mountains and they know not
Who overturneth them in his wrath.
Who shaketh the earth from her place,
So that its pillars do tremble.
Who speaks to the sun, and it shineth not,
And layeth his seal upon the stars,
And stretcheth out the heavens by Himself,
And walketh on wave-crests of the sea.
Who created the Bear, Orion, and Sirius,
And the treasure houses of the South.
(Where the meteoric stars are hidden)
He hath done great things that are unsearchable,
And wonderful things without number."

Job is no more able to see Him when He passes by, than the mountains to note who shake them. No one need teach Job lessons on God's omnipotence and supremacy. He knows his power, and he knows that in the face of it he is helpless. *Eloah* does not withdraw his anger, and what can his puny strength do when the ancient demons who fought with the great dragon were with her compelled to bow before Him?

It is this omnipotent power which Job admits (as Prometheus

admitted the unlimited might of Zeus), which constitutes his despair. Submission to the tyrannous oppression is necessary, for "Who can say to Him: What doest thou?" He will not even allow him his breath, but filleth him with bitterness. It is not a question of merit or demerit, of piety or wickedness in such a case. God is irresponsible, and defenceless mortals have no appeal. Guilty or innocent—it is all alike to Him.

"Though I were right my mouth *must* condemn me,
Though I am innocent he maketh me perverse ;
I am innocent—
I trouble not for my soul,
I despise my life.
It is all one, therefore, I say
The innocent as the wicked he destroyeth ;
If the scourge slays suddenly,
He laughs at the trial of the innocent."

There is a fiendish delight even in this despotic and evil government. Yes; God is omnipotent and He employs his omnipotence unscrupulously, and, therefore, the protesting of his innocence is useless. The idea here is not that of his friends and the usual idea of the Old Testament, viz.: that the omniscient may see evil even where there is a consciousness of innocence. This idea of absolute power ending in scrupulous tyranny is a distinct outcome of Jewish Calvinism—that idea of God which compares him with the potter and man with the clay in his hands which he moulds, uses, or breaks at will. When human freedom is submerged in the infinite, then in the face of ill God never can be other than despotic. Job says that God's acts are not determined by justice. He even shows favor to the wicked and *a fortiori* evil for the good.

The remaining part of the speech is tantamount to an accusation that He has created him and preserved him for a treacherous purpose, and it closes by referring to his birth with which his injustice began, and defiantly tells God to withdraw from him and to let him have "a little comfort" before he goes hence to dark Hades.

ELIPHAZ AND BILDAD COMPARED.

Let us look for a moment at the character of the interlocutors, for these are evidently chosen as types, otherwise the whole argument would have been more easily presented in a dialogue between two. We saw that Eliphaz approached Job as a courteous and well-bred gentlemen. He politely asks, as he enters upon discourse, whether Job would be grieved if he ventured to speak with him, and his first words are words of sincere congratulation. That which he had to say was drawn chiefly from his own experience, observation, and a revelation specially vouchsafed to him. The ideas he advances are all in support of his narrow dogma, but they are presented with as little harshness, perhaps, as was consonant with the strength of his convictions. If there was sore affliction, it undoubtedly had a cause which God in His omniscience could see though Job could not. A man might and ought indeed to feel happy under affliction, for it proceeds from benevolence and issues in exaltation. He casts a halo of glory over Job's future, if Job will but patiently submit.

There is no crudity here,—no unnecessary severity. We cannot help remembering that Eliphaz was from Temen, which, as we learn from other parts of the Old Testament, was the home of wisdom, a region blest with generations of cultured gentlemen. Eliphaz acts and speaks in full harmony with his antecedents of birth and privilege. While there seemed no necessity for severe language, he used none. In contrast with him we saw Bildad *the Shuhite* whose native place is unknown. He is a man from some obscure part who possesses none of Eliphaz's fine intuitions and exhibits none of his graces of good-breeding. His first words are grossly impertinent. He tells Job that he is a violent blusterer. He starts out with a series of provoking and insinuating *ifs*. *If* his children were all dead, they deserved it. God knows that. *If* he would seek God. *If* he were pure, instantly God would awake for him. Eliphaz reasoned from his experience and from his religious visions which he held to be revelations. Bildad taunted him with

accusations of pride and smote him with tradition. Eliphaz and Bildad, alike agreeing in their dogma, declare that suffering does not come uncaused. "Affliction does not come out of the ground," says Eliphaz. "The rush cannot grow without mire," retorts Bildad. They hold the same faith and are equally zealous in its defense, but how differently they approach their task. Bildad, it is true, had heard before speaking, and Eliphaz had not, Job's vehement arraignment of the Almighty and his titanic defiance of Him as an unscrupulous spier of men. But does this explain the difference between them, the one courteous and kind, the other offensive and vulgar, or must we remember, first of all, that Eliphaz was a Temanite, and Bildad a Shuhite? Bildad has all the narrowness of Eliphaz's creed and none of his urbanity, and intellectually he is a very mediocre character. I think we will not make a mistake if we credit the poet with a purpose in bringing these discernibly different characters upon the stage. Eliphaz is a representative of high birth, good breeding, cultured intellect,—an aristocrat, if you will, from Teman. Bildad represents the low-born wanting in those finer flavors of spirit which are won by persons of less favorable antecedents only when gifted by nature with fine perceptions and large mentality. He stands for the mass of the intellectually mediocre.

That Bildad was fitted to represent this class is, I think, clearly discernible from his speeches. They are for the most part stale platitudes, threadbare phrases without any stamp of individuality. Rusticity is writ large upon him. His range of thought is limited to rushes, and papyrus, and spider's webs in his first speech. His vision is confined to beasts, tents, gins, snares, and brimstone in his second. He speaks out of his past, and his tortoise brain exhausts itself in the end in a vapid valedictory of *ten* lines in which he says nothing which had not been infinitely better said before. Unfortunately his class is large. We are thankful to the poet who cut him off with *six verses* in his last speech, when he began to drivel about the unclean thing a *woman-born* man is, and to find his real counterpart in squirming worms, his perfect analogue in putridity, and worm-breeding putridities at that. His speech, Cap.

xxv. 6, is the only place in the Old Testament where the word *rimma* is metaphorically applied to man. The word means primarily that which is rotten, and is then applied to the *worms generated in putrid flesh*. Bildad may have had sterling qualities, but despite the pure air of the desert and the company of refined associates, the scent of vulgarity is on his garments, and his mind remains a monotonous and dreary waste. It was the penetration of artistic genius that made him an advocate of the old creed.

ZOPHAR THE NAAMATHITE.

This third interlocutor, who appears for the first time in Cap. XI., is less obscure than Bildad and evidently has better antecedents. He has some sublimity of thought and is naturally touched with a greater feeling of kindness. In point of character and ability he stands between Eliphaz and Bildad. He shares the universal conviction of the divine unfathomableness and human incapacity to understand the divine ways. But one-third of his speech is a poem of promise and consolation. His first words are an arraignment of Job for his vain and idle utterances. He has rendered a hasty verdict of injustice against God, and without comprehending his own limitations acted as judge and acquitted himself by denying impurity both in life and doctrine. Bad as his case has been if God should declare all the evidence he would see that his offences were not all weighed. Job cannot expect to know the real standing of the case, because he cannot explore the infiniteness of divine wisdom.

"Canst thou discover the secret of *Eloah*,
Canst thou find out the perfection of *Shaddai*?
It is higher than heaven, what canst thou do?
Deeper than Sheol, what canst thou know?"

Zophar's reasoning is this: The divine wisdom transcends all human knowledge. The divine acts are based upon divine wisdom; therefore the causes of the divine act, which produces suffering, cannot be humanly comprehended. But they lie clear to view in the transcendent knowledge of God. Zophar has hope, however, for the most foolish and violent.

"Even a vain man may come to understanding,
And the wild ass' colt may be tamed."

Therefore he, too, counsels repentance with promise of restoration :

"If thou prepare thine heart,
And stretchest out thine hand toward Him.
If iniquity be in thy hand, cast it forth,
And let not wickedness dwell in thy tents.
Even then shalt thou lift up thy face without spot."

God knows ; man does not ; submit, therefore, and repent, *for guilty you must be*. This is the *subauditur* that runs all through these illogical arguments.

JOB'S REPLY.

Job has now heard his three friends, and they have all asserted *his guilt*. They have appealed to natural law to prove that every effect has a cause. "Trouble does not spring out of the ground," Eliphaz said. "The rush does not grow up without mire," said Bildad. Tradition and experience, they say, connect sin and suffering as unholy cause and effect. Eliphaz and Zophar dwell upon God's omniscience, suggesting that He sees the sin of which Job is, perhaps, unconscious, but which nevertheless has caused his suffering.

Job insists in his reply that though his friends have spoken at length, they have mistaken metaphors for arguments and speech for wisdom. All they have said about natural law and divine omniscience, Job knows as well as they.

The whole course of reasoning has been in a circle. When analysed it is simply : Here is suffering. Suffering is always the result of sin. Therefore Job sinned. Job denies it, but that does not alter matters. Job does not know all that God knows. Their minor premiss is an assumption, but it is precisely this minor premiss that constitutes the whole question in debate. Job insists that his case disproves it, and, therefore, as a general proposition it must be abandoned.

According to Job they have haughtily laid claim to a superior

wisdom and contributed nothing to the solution of the perplexing problem. They have merely exhausted his patience with irrelevant statements and the commonest platitudes. And Job answered and said (Cap. XII-XIV.):

"No doubt ye are the people,
And wisdom shall die with you.
But I have understanding as well as you.
Who knoweth not such things as these?"

The whole creation rises up to teach them.

This conceit of wisdom on their part is nothing less than scornful reproach and cowardice. He is indignant and wounded by their trifling truisms which he has heard *ad nauseam*. They have been sheer mockery. But such is the way of the world.

"Contempt for misfortune from those who are at ease,
A thrust for them whose feet are unsteady."

More than this, God gives prosperity to the wicked and leaves robbers to dwell in peaceful tents. What remains then of their doctrine? Facts plain and palpable disprove it. The facts of nature prove divine wisdom and power. The hand of the Lord is visible in created things. Yea, "speak to the earth and it shall teach thee." But the question of a moral and beneficent and just power, these facts do not prove. Omnipotent power does not prove divine justice. Is God freed from suspicion, Job tacitly asks (15-25), when you consider how he uses his power?

"He turneth judges into fools,
He looseth the chains of kings (put on rebellious captives),
And puts a rope around their own waists.
He leaves priests (who serve Him) to be spoiled.
He taketh away the understanding of the aged.
He increaseth nations and destroyeth them.
Lo! mine eye hath seen all this,
Mine ear hath heard and understood!
What ye know, I know,
I am not inferior to you."

Eliphaz had referred to his experience: "According as I have seen, they that plowed iniquity and sowed trouble, reaped the

same." If that is all, Job says, he has looked with the one eye that sees but half the world. Instead of there being strict justice in the moral government of the world, facts point to a malignant power and divine caprice. To bolster up the case for God by specious arguments, is proof, not of the spirit of piety, but of falsehood. The moral law forbidding respect of persons does not exclude God. They are false witnesses self-subpoenaed on God's behalf. They must be conscious of prejudice in His favor, "forgers of lies," therefore,

"Shall not His excellency make you afraid,
And His dread fall upon you?"

Job in these utterances proves himself, sceptic, pessimist, doubter as he is, the only truly religious one of the number.

In Cap. XIII., 13, in view of the worthlessness of their defence, he prays that they may leave him alone. With the intolerable weight of his sufferings there is a necessity of utterance, and utter himself he will, come what may. He will maintain his ways before him, though he knows he will slay him, and that there is no hope. (Not—"though he slay me, yet will I trust him.")

We have here one of the sublimest affirmations of the rights of conscience. Job measured the might of Omnipotence. It awed him, but it did not overwhelm him. There is something within, Job feels, that has a divinity of its own with which to face almighty power, viz., a conscience at peace with itself,—an unassailable rectitude. "My ways in His face will I justify." The thought of a moral victory elevates him for the moment above his suffering. God is addressed (verse 17 ff.) and the demand is made that his case be heard. He has prepared his statement and it must be heard at the peril of death. In the presence of deity he declares his contention: "I know that I am righteous." If God prefers the suit he will appear as defendant. It matters not.

"Call thou and I will answer ;
Or let me speak, and answer thou me."

He demands that God shall show cause for treating him as guilty and that He shall come out into the light.

"Tell me what is my transgression and my sin,
Wherefore hidest thou thy face
And holdest me for thine enemy?"

Job is entitled to know what he is suffering for. But of course this cannot be, for God is punishing Job for the forgotten and unconscious sins of his youth. Rank injustice this, but it does not stand alone. God has put his feet in stocks and indulged Himself in exquisite refinements of cruelty, and has drawn a line about his feet so that he cannot move. And yet what is he—his body full of ulcerous sores—he is like a moth-eaten garment. Surely an unequal contest! Then comes a revulsion of feeling induced by the thought of omnipotent power venting itself on a defenceless creature done to death, and there is a reversion to the old pessimistic view of life. He dwells in Cap. XIV. almost fondly upon its vanity and brevity, just as one sometimes morbidly enjoys a great grief. Man's life is a fleet shadow, a frail flower. He has not even the hope of inanimate nature:

"For there is hope even for a tree,
If it be cut down it may sprout again,
.
But the strong man dieth and passeth away,
And man expires, and where is he?"

At this point a ray of light breaks half way through the darkness. What if a man may live after death! What if God should choose to hide Job in dark Sheol for a time and then bring him back to light? How gladly, in that case, would he wait there like a soldier on guard till his relief came! For a moment it is not only a possibility; it is a certainty to be looked for. In the conflict between God's anger, which was bringing him to Sheol, and His love the latter would be victorious.

"Thou wilt call and I shall answer thee,
For the work of thy hands wilt thou have desire."

It is a fascinating but baseless thought. It flashes for a moment upon Job, and swiftly the thought is gone. Suddenly grim despair seizes him again. His despondent mood returns and he sees in the destructive processes of nature a symbol of the ruin of

human hopes, of that hope that like a gleam of sunshine had just slanted across the vision of his dream :

"But, the mountain falling is destroyed,
And the rock is moved from its place ;
The water weareth away stones.
The rainstorm sweeps away the soil.
So the hope of man hast thou destroyed."

The awakening even for a time of this hope shows us that Job still clings to his belief in God. Despite the freedom of his complaint, his unconcealed scepticism aroused by his own condition, and the insoluble enigmas of life, there is in the deeper under-swell of his thought a personal trust.

Chapter XIV. closes the first cycle of the book. A careful reading will detect a contrast not only between the views expressed on the subject discussed, but also between the range of the speaker's thoughts. Among the friends Eliphaz is *facile princeps*; of the other two Zophar is superior to Bildad. But none of them shows the same range of knowledge and variety and virility of speech so characteristic of Job's rebuttals. Intellectual scepticism, where it is sincere, implies, first, ability to weigh argument, power of analysis. It often implies, as here, a poetic sense which perceives a truth as the seer although it may fail to formulate it in definite propositions. And, secondly, it has the freedom, if perfectly honest, of fearlessness. It naturally issues, therefore, in originality of thought, cogency, and versatility. Definitely prescribed belief on the other hand, of any form, sets bounds both to the thought and the imagination. It works towards sterility and monotony. No man can "by taking thought" be a *sceptic* any more than he can add a cubit to his stature. None of Job's friends could be other than they were. They might have ceased to be religious, but they could not become religious sceptics.

SECOND CYCLE OF SPEECHES (Chap. 15-21). ELIPHAZ.

The old arguments are repeated. Eliphaz's orthodox zeal has now forced his suave manners into the background. Every age has been an inquisition age—the instruments of torture differ, that

is all. Here barbed and burning words are used to extort a confession of penitence from the guiltless. It is doctrinal zeal making the tender hearted cruel. Eliphaz knows that his manner has changed from its first mildness. In verse 11 he refers to "the word that was gentle with thee"—his previous speech. He now borrows phrases from the vulgar Bildad and asks Job if his belly has been filled with the East wind. He harps as Bildad did upon the uncleanness of man born of woman. He falls back again upon tradition as to the invariable connexion between sin and suffering. Sarcastically he asks Job :

"Wert thou the first of men to be born,
And wert thou begotten before the hills ?
Dost thou have audience in the Counsel of Eloah,
And dost thou seize upon wisdom for thyself ?"

You act like a man who had a monopoly of wisdom. Yet all the gray-haired and the aged, men older than thy father, are on our side. He charges Job with turning his spirit against God—he the abominable and corrupt, who "drinketh iniquity like water." He demands attention and then proceeds to restate his view, suffering is the destined lot of the wicked. Knowing that Job had lost all his children, and that the fire consumed his flocks, and the Sabaeans and Chaldaeans had fallen upon his oxen and camels, he makes a pitiless thrust at the end,

"The company of the wicked shall be barren,
And fire consumeth the tents of bribery."

JOB'S REPLY.

These vain words do not assuage Job's grief. In Cap. XVI. he wonders why his friends wish to speak at all, seeing they have nothing to say which is pertinent to the case. He could speak as they do and shake his head at them if places were changed. Their severity has outdone itself. Swiftly flashes the thought upon him that they are irresponsibly used by Jahwe who has chosen them as His instruments of attack.

"*El* hath delivered me to the ungodly,
And into the hands of the wicked hath cast me.

I lived in peace, but he hath broken me to bits,
 Seized me by the neck and dashed me to pieces.
 He hath set me up for his target.
 His arrows encompass me about.
 He poureth out my gall upon the ground.
 He breaketh me with breach upon breach.
 He runneth upon me (as upon) a giant.

 My face is foul with weeping,
 And on my eyelids is the shadow of death,
 And yet there is no wickedness in my hands."

This statement of conscious innocence redeems his trust in God, who is the witness of his innocence.

"Even now, behold my witness is in heaven,
 And he that voucheth for me is on high."

In Chapter XVII. he asks for protection from his "friends," and this must come quickly, for his end is near.

BILDAD'S SPEECH (Cap. XVIII.).

Bildad's speech is briefly summed up in a comparison of Job to a wild beast caught in a trap and tearing itself in fury. He asks tauntingly whether Job thinks the earth is going to be changed for his sake, or the rock removed from its place. Does he expect God to make a special law *for him*, one, forsooth, that would give him liberty to sin and escape the universal consequence. The gist of it is, that if Job is suffering, it is because he walked into the trap.

JOB'S REPLY (Cap. XIX.).

is vehement. He had replied to Eliphaz that had he been in their place, "the solace of his lips would have assuaged their grief." Now, he tells Bildad they have insulted him now ten times. Even if their view were correct, it did not justify their hardened opposition to him. This, then, is the inference to be drawn: "Know you that God hath overthrown me, and taken me in his net." Consequently when he makes his appeal for justice, no one gives judgment. God for some reason treats him with violence and hatred, and the hosts of God, with evil purpose, surround his tent. Breth-

ren and acquaintances He has estranged from him. Kinsfolk and familiar friends have forgotten him; his servants heed him not; his wife avoids him, and even children despise him. All that remains to him is life, and that is the misery of it. The fierce and brutal antagonism of his consolers and his utter abandonment produced the conviction that it was all from God. In the unequal contest, then, where were his friends?

"Pity me, pity me, O my friends,
For the hand of the Lord hath smitten me."

It is when he has reached this conviction that his affliction is from God that his confidence mounts highest, that ultimate justice will prevail. God, in other words, is saved out of the wreck of Job's old faith *by Job's own sense of justice*. God is never abandoned by Job, because "the pure in heart see God." They do more than see Him, they create Him, as human love transmutes its object into its own ideal.

The latter part of this nineteenth Chapter contains the finest and most unfaltering declaration of Job's faith in justice. He had just wished that his protestations of innocence might be written in letters of lead in solid rock,—a lasting rock-inscription for future generations to read. He sees something better, however, and more abiding, God himself will be his vindicator.

"But I know that my vindicator liveth,
And as the last will He arise over the dust,
And behind my so mangled skin,
And without my flesh (which is wasted away) shall I see God,
Whom I shall see favourable to me,
And mine eyes shall behold and not as an oppressor."

In this passage Job is not thinking of a *future* life. He is anticipating, despite his present tried and mocked condition, the vindication which ultimately comes when Jahwe appears. The A. V. and R. V. both transfer the hope of Job here to a future state, but only by a misinterpretation and mistranslation. "For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth: And though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet

in my flesh shall I see God, whom I shall see for myself and mine eyes shall behold and not another."

ZOPHAR'S SECOND SPEECH (Cap. XX.).

Zophar dwells upon the unstable character of the wicked man's prosperity. He talks, as it were, in parable of a rapacious man of power suddenly left destitute and destroyed.

"Knowest thou this, since the first,
Since man was set upon the earth,
That the joy of the wicked is short,
And the gladness of the corrupt but a twinkling," etc.

In this joy of the wicked, Zophar is referring to Job's hope, just expressed, of vindication. Job in reply, Cap. XXI., for the first time in this cycle of the arguments meets these assertions, that the wicked always get their deserts, with a direct denial. He forbids the premises, from which they are so bent on drawing their conclusions. Zophar does not see that it is the converse of the proposition that he needs to prove, nor does Job call attention to it; but the proposition, that the wicked are invariably punished, Job denies.

"Why do the wicked live,
Become old, yea, mighty in power?
Their seed is established with them,
And their offspring before their eyes."

Their houses are safe, their flocks increase, they make merry, enjoy wealth, and die without pain. Job admits that there are opposite cases, where they are overtaken by calamity. But this is precisely the point. The wicked prosper, and the wicked are destroyed. Therefore a man's fate is independent of his goodness or badness. The universal law they wish to establish is declared void by these opposing facts.

THIRD CYCLE OF SPEECHES (Caps. XXII-XXXI.).

We have seen that Job in his reply, at the close of the second cycle, met the contention of his friends, that wickedness always issues in suffering, with an absolute denial. He then substantiated

his position by reference to facts which not only defy contradiction but are matter of common observation,—facts which run clean athwart their orthodox tenets and establish the idea, not of an unvarying principle of government, but the opposite. Job charges his friends with lack of candor, and courage to acknowledge the truth, with prejudice in God's favor to whom they were showing the same kind of slavish preference as they might to some powerful client who was listening behind the screen.

In the first cycle they dwelt upon God's omniscience. Job showed that he fully appreciated human limitations, and acknowledged the inscrutable character of divine wisdom, by excelling them in forcible expression of it. But he showed also the irrelevancy of *omniscience* in the debate and its inapplicability to the solution of the mysterious riddle of his own suffering and human existence under such conditions.

In the second cycle they dwelt upon his providence in government, and Job denied their conclusions. In the third cycle Eliphaz begins by telling Job that God in His treatment of men is not influenced by any regard He has for Himself, God is quite superior to and independent of man's regard. "Is it any pleasure to God that thou art righteous?" God may demand worship, obedience, and submission, the content of righteousness according to their ideas, but in His sublime exaltation He is superior to it. This is an idea wholly antagonistic to ancient thought, not only among the Jews but also among extra-Israelitish peoples. In Euripides Hippolytus, e. g., Aphrodite, the Goddess begins the prologue :

"Known among men and not unnamed, am I,
The goddess Kypris, and in heaven as well,
Of all who dwell between the Atlantic bounds
And Euxine sea and look upon the sun,
Those I advance who reverence my power,
And those who proudly scorn me I bring to grief;
(Exactly the view of the three friends)
For this is natural even for the gods
To take delight in honors from mankind."

When Eliphaz takes the opposite view here it is a concession to Job's higher view of deity—that divine transcendence which

makes God's acts inscrutable. Eliphaz's thoughts of God are momentarily enlarged. He acknowledges a perfection of being calm and unconditioned in its infinitude. Quick as a flash Eliphaz draws the conclusion : If God enters into dealings with man it must be for man's sake. And, for piety God would not afflict, therefore, it must be for sin. In this third cycle, since the other considerations failed to move Job to a confession, Eliphaz is driven to the desperate resort of openly assailing him as a *heartless and inhuman sinner*. Previous insinuations are framed into definite impeachments. But Eliphaz, true to his character, even here, seeks to take the sting out of his accusations by enticing promises partly of a worldly nature, partly spiritual. Job should in the end exult in the chiefest of philanthropic joys, and become a saviour to those who were not innocent. At the same time he has accused him specifically of oppression of the poor and the naked, of callous-hearted treatment of the widow and the orphan ; he has acted as though God could not see through the thick clouds. This he alleges is a part of Job's creed. Hence the enormity of his crime can be compared only to the evil way of the wicked race of giants who lived before the Flood, and filled the earth with deeds of violence ; he asks :

"Wilt thou keep to the old way
Which wicked men have trod,
Who were cut down before their time,
Whose foundation was poured out as a river ?
Who kept saying to *El*, 'Depart from us,'
And 'What can *Shaddai* do for (or to) us?'"

With the exception of Bildad's interjection of a few words the indictment of the *friends* against Job is ended. The opposing evidence, to speak in the language of the courts, is all in and Job proceeds with his defence until Jahwe appears to sum up the merits of the case and pronounce the verdict.

JOB'S REPLY.

Job passes over in contemptuous silence and conscious superiority the alleged crimes laid to his charge. In Chap. XXIII.

Job begins with a wish that he could find God and bring his case before his judgment-seat and plead with arguments the righteousness of it. He knows that he would come forth as tried gold. But that is a vain hope.

"I go forward, but he is not there,
And backward, but I cannot perceive him."

Even if he could reach him he would not get a just decision from this omnipotent and irresponsible power.

"He willeth and who can prevent him ?
He doeth what his soul desireth
And he will accomplish my fate,
Therefore, I am terrified in his presence,
I perceive and am in dread of Him."

Further, if God foresees all human times and fates, why do not men who claim to know Him have some knowledge of His ways? His own experience proves that they do not, and this enforced ignorance is tacitly held to be an act of injustice.

Job next passes to a long description of wicked men's ways as his mind reverts to the main thesis. He recites at length their oppression of the poor and helpless, yet God doth not impute it to their folly. Often they come to an undesirable end at last, it is true, but in the main God giveth them security, and when they die they die as others. Who, he defiantly asks, will disprove his words, and prove him false? Job has added nothing whatever here to the progress of thought.

Bildad then attempts a reply. The main point is the old hackneyed one of man's impurity and God's omnipotence. Job does not deny the latter. On the other hand he breaks forth into a masterly panegyric of God's wisdom and power in Cap. XXVI.

The thought of this omnipotence, as often as Job dwells upon it, forces upon him the consideration of his own relation to it. He feels his puny insignificance before this majesty of power, but he feels, also, within himself the might of a pure and therefore undismayed conscience. He is consequently willing to take oath in God's name that so long as breath is in his nostrils he will not perjure his soul by a plea of guilty.

"While my breath remaineth in me
 And the spirit of God in my nostrils,
 My lips shall not speak iniquity,
 And my tongue shall not utter falsehood.

(The meaning here is not as vulgarly understood: "I will continue to live a righteous life.")

God forbid that I should justify you,
 Till I die will I not forsake mine integrity.

My heart will not reproach me so long as I live."

From verse 7 to the end of Chapter XXVII. Job turns upon his friends whom he regards as enemies and ranks with the wicked. His description of the fate of the wicked which follows is inconsistent with what he has said before. Previously he said that a wretched doom often does dog the heels of crime; but he held that this was no necessary or invariable consequence (Cap. XXI.). Now he apparently speaks as though there were no exceptions. We can hardly attribute to him such a rapid revolution in thought. The wicked man that he is here threatening is the wilful *perverter* of the truth. Before, he spoke of the general class of sinners. Here he is specifying more particularly the unrighteous and godless, using the same word for unrighteous as we find, e. g., in Lev. 15, where it is used of "perverting judgment," and the same word for "godless" as occurs in Zeph. 3:3, where it is set in direct antithesis to the clear and open judgment of Jahwe.

For the *wicked perverter of truth* there is no forgiveness. This is the unpardonable sin, and his "friends" have been found guilty. They have denied his integrity and accused him of all manner of sin in the interest of their narrow dogma. Without any evidence of wickedness they have assumed him to be guilty from the first, and, at the last, they have charged him with specific crimes. Their conscience must be their accuser, and God will be their judge.

"Terrors shall take hold upon him,
 And (God) shall cast on him and not spare."

In Job conscience found its apotheosis. The one class of sinners upon whom the shafts of God's anger will be unerringly hurled is the desecrator of this Holy of Holies.

All along they have threatened Job with divine judgment. Job now pronounces the anathema of God on them.

Almost all interpreters regard this passage as directly antagonistic to Job's previous position consistently held from the beginning, and it is commonly regarded as an interpolation. On the contrary, I think that a legitimate interpretation shows it to be in complete harmony with Job's view of the moral demands of conscience. Against that inner spirit of truth no word spoken would be forgiven. This was the sin of his friends in the interest of an old orthodoxy.

CONCLUSION OF ARGUMENT.

At this point the discussion of the book ends. Chap. XXVIII. is in the nature of a conclusion. The ever-recurring question of the ages, the reconciliation of human suffering with God's omnipotence and justice, has been discussed. The old Hebrew dogma has been found by inference to be unsupported by the facts. It not only is utterly inapplicable in the case of Job, it fails of support in countless other cases well attested by common experience. How, then, does the case lie? It belongs to the sphere of mystery into which human wisdom cannot enter. The whole question of existence in view of its unhappiness has been raised with the particular question and the answer is nowhere to be found, but with God himself—with Him alone is wisdom. The conclusion of this book, so far as it aims at solving life's mysteries, might be stated in the words of Lewes's *Life of Goethe*: "The mystery of existence is an awful problem, but it is a mystery, and placed beyond the boundary of human faculty! Recognise it as such and renounce. Knowledge can only be relative, never absolute. But this relative knowledge is infinite, and to us infinitely important. Happiness, ideal and absolute, is equally unattainable. Renounce it. The sphere of active duty is wide, sufficing, ennobling to all who strenuously work in it." It is the conclusion of *Faust*:

"Nach drüben ist die Aussicht uns verrannt;
Thor! wer dorthin die Augen blinzelnd richtet,
Sich über Wolken seines Gleichen dichtet!"

Er stehe fest und sehe hier sich um ;
 Dem Tüchtigen ist diese Welt nicht stumm.
 Was braucht er in die Ewigkeit zu schweifen !
 Was er erkennt, lässt sich ergreifen.
 Er wandle so den Erdentag entlang ;
 Wenn Geister spuken, geh' er seinen Gang ;
 Im Weiterschreiten find' er Qual und Glück,
 Er ! unbefriedigt jeden Augenblick."

Here, too, with Job practical duty and practical truth must take the place of speculative and absolute truth. Theoretical wisdom is unsearchable. Life's mysteries are insoluble. Practical wisdom is open to all.

"The fear of the Lord is wisdom,
 And to avoid evil is understanding."

The point to be noticed in this conclusion is that Job makes ethical duty a categorical imperative,—the law of life absolute and unconditioned by considerations of reward and punishment. This Chapter (XXVIII.) gives the most vigorous presentation of the wisdom and claims of ethical duty.

From here on Job seems to be casting back again over the course of his thoughts and to be making a rapid survey of his life. This naturally induces some of the old moods, and some of the former ideas are reiterated. He calls to mind the days of his prosperity and wishes he "were as in the months of old when God watched over him, and His lamp shined upon his head,—when the Almighty was yet with him, and his children were round about him." He recalls his past integrity, his unselfish and benevolent life, and his hope when he said :

" I will die in my nest and reckon my days as the sand."

In Chap. XXX. he contrasts those happy days with his present misery. Then princes once held their breath in his presence. Now men who are the offscouring of the earth—no better than savage troglodytes—hold him in derision.

In Chap. XXXI. he sums up his defence with a reiteration of his innocence. He wishes God would weigh him in a balance, as the Egyptian soul was weighed by Thoth. Then would the feather

weight of justice proclaim his integrity. Besides freedom from sins of unchastity, oppression, lying, fraud, avarice, he claims purity in worship. He has never kissed his hand to his mouth when he has seen the sun walking in its splendor and the moon marching in its greatness. Had he indulged in these heathen idolatries then had he denied his God and would have been guilty. Before the judgment seat he stands with unbowed head and conscience calm. We look back upon this sublimest spirit of literature challenged to love, and we obey. We turn to the tragedy of life misunderstood by would-be friends and guides, and we see afresh the sad meaning of those fine but truthful words :

"Innocence seethed, in its mothers milk,
And charity setting the martyr aflare."

The case is ended with Cap. XXXI., and Job appeals to the Almighty for the verdict. Caps. 38-41 contain the answer. The speeches of Elihu which intervene and to which Job makes no reply are undoubtedly a later interpolation.

The reason these speeches of Elihu were introduced was probably because the readers to whom they are due felt (as is indicated in the introduction to them, Cap. 32 : 3) that the attempt of the three friends to justify the ways of God were a signal failure. After Elihu's speech Job is silenced. Elihu's theodicy is little in advance of that of the friends. The corrective element of suffering is more distinctly brought out. The author of the poem evidently did not feel that there was much to be said in favor of this argument, and, therefore, omitted it for the most part from the "friends" speeches.

The angelology, especially the idea of *one* mediating angel which represents the later stage of thought, is distinctly prominent in Cap. XXXIII.

JAHWE'S REPLY.

In Jahwe's reply, he says to Job: "Gird up thy loins like a man, I will question and thou shalt answer me." The poet thus connects the answer with Job's previous challenge, in which Job said that it mattered not how the case was conducted—who took the place of plaintiff, who of defendant. Job had propounded a

great many questions himself. Now question after question is put to him to which he can give only a negative reply. At the end Job says :

"Behold I am of small account ;
What shall I answer thee,
I lay mine hand upon my mouth.
Once have I spoken, and I will not reply,
Yea twice, but I will proceed no further."

God speaks again out of the whirlwind and Job is reproved for his vehement invective, which it is intimated implied an assumption of omniscience. The most awe-inspiring objects of nature are rapidly brought before him. In them God's power is manifest, and by contrast his own impotence is emphasised. Job thus attains not to a new view but a greatly enlarged view of the divine omnipotence and unsearchableness. Notwithstanding his previous lofty conceptions of the divine attributes he fell far short of truly estimating them. Of this Job is now convinced. He acknowledges that much that he has said has been without knowledge. At the end he is made to repent of his rashness of speech, *but not of previous sin as the cause of his trouble.* On the other hand, God speaks to Eliphaz, saying : "*My wrath is kindled against thee and thy two friends, for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right, as my servant Job hath.*" Job is justified and restored to double his prosperity. The names of his daughters are intended to express his newfound joy. Jemimah means "door," Keziah "sweet perfume," and Keren-happuch "rouge and stibium bottle." Peace, delight, and beauty are the attendants of his later life.

JOB'S REPENTANCE.

What is Job's repentance? After reading the speech of Jahwe we are a little surprised at the verdict. We are prepared to hear sentence pronounced against Job. God did not demand repentance of Job, however, neither does he deny his integrity. His own conscience has never admitted guilt. Thrice in the epilogue Jahwe says : "My servant Job hath spoken of me the thing that is right." Jahwe's commendation of Job is not for repentance, but for his

fearless candour and truthful attitude with respect to Jahwe. The friends are condemned because they were not truthful. They with their narrow creed had probably serious doubts about it, or much as they had to say of his omnipotence and providence they assumed that their theory was coextensive with the requirements of the case concerning which they were ignorant, thus narrowing God to a creed. Job's scepticism grew out of his inability to comprehend God. The friends even when they dwelt upon the divine majesty spoke without true religious reverence. In their assumption of a higher adequate knowledge and truth they proved their lack of both. Job's arguments, therefore, in so far as they were a protest against the possibility of reducing God and his acts to the measure of human theories, such as the prevailing Hebrew doctrine of divine providence as exemplified in the prevalent belief in a divine retribution manifest in all suffering, showed the higher reverence and reached the higher truth, negative though it was. But Job, on the other hand, was too self-centered in his thought. Through Jahwe's speech his views are enlarged—God's care and providence extend throughout the whole world of life—the universe is his care. Job's thoughts of self and personal suffering are minimized in the presence of this enlarged conception of God and the universe of which he is only a part. God and life remain to him more inscrutable than ever. His repentance is not demanded, but the new vision produces the conviction that he had spoken vehement words where he should "have laid his hand upon his mouth."

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